Food losses and waste in the context of sustainable food systems

Specific recommendations from the Civil Society Task Team

We recommend:

1.   That at all levels, CFS and States reconsider and promote the logic of the need to change the food production system to take into account the fact that genuinely sustainable food systems are based on peasant family farming that, by their very nature, reduce food waste and loss. They need, above all, to connect small-scale producers to local markets, to connect rural and urban areas, and to re-localise food production and consumption based on agro-ecological models.

2.   That the CFS and States develop clear guidelines and good practice case studies to help drive change in the global food sector where current buying and marketing practices lead to considerable loss and waste.

3.   FAO undertake additional studies to support supply chains based on agroecological production linked to the various forms of sustainable small-scale processing and direct/short chain distribution through alternative food distribution systems (AFDS), including Community Supported Agriculture, genuine local farmers markets, producer-consumer coops.

4.   That States support agroecological small-scale production as a means of reducing FLW on farms, increasing resilience of food systems and optimising positive, sustainable environmental impacts.

5.   That States and Local Authorities provide greater support to improving city-region food systems, linked to a broader agenda towards strengthening the rural-urban continuum. This can lead to a reduction in food waste at the level of the urban consumer and the regional producer, as well as support local economies and reduce carbon footprint within the food system

6.   That States and Local Authorities emphasize the need to reduce food waste and eat seasonal, local food as part of an overall approach to a more sustainable system. This can lead to lower food miles, easier tracking of energy conservation, improved freshness etc.

7.   That States/Local Authorities support Public Procurement for schools/hospitals etc based on a reformed approach enabling small-scale local producers to supply healthy local agroecologically-produced food that will be prepared by local collective catering kitchens.

8.   States continue to introduce framework legislation such as solidarity economy legislation which can support and empower Local Food Policy Councils and Alternative Food Distribution Systems in general.

9.   That Local Authorities ensure local food kitchens and social groceries are enabled to source their food from small scale local agroecological producers and local cooperative/solidarity economy processing units and support means whereby healthy, local produce is made accessible for the socially excluded (such as through Community Supported Agriculture)

10.   That all actors reduce packaging and transport inasmuch as this is sustainable, and enable portions of food to be bought that correspond to real needs of consumers and discourage, through effective mechanisms and regulations, the production of food loss and waste (rewards for reduction and levies/taxes when food waste is produced) resulting from marketing practices leading to over-consumption or from sourcing practices.

11.   CFS and States issue new guidelines for the food industry to avoid the practice of feeding human grade foods to livestock.

12.   That States facilitate the establishment of Community banks and small-scale local processing cooperatives/social-solidarity enterprise as a means of avoiding FLW, creating local employment and community-led initiatives

13.   The international community as a whole pay special attention to FLW in times and areas of conflict

14.   States and Regional/Local Authorities pay specific attention to maintaining and preserving traditional markets in developing countries.

15.   CFS develop guidelines for States to be able to assess – through a multi-stakeholder process – the sustainability of their food systems as well as developing guidance and means of building sustainable food systems.